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Gentle Reader:

We are happy to present to you the second issue of CALLIOPE. CALLIOPE's structure reflects its content. The articles which follow were written by undergraduates at Queens College as part of their normal course work. These articles were submitted to CALLIOPE by members of the Queens faculty, and selected for publication by CALLIOPE's editors because, in the words of Horace, they both "delight and instruct." We are sure that you, Gentle Reader, will join with us in congratulating the authors of these articles. We are sure, too, that you will profit as we have from the considered perusal of these students' works. Our thanks to Phyllis Bruce and Dr. Richard Ault who helped prepare this number of CALLIOPE.

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Richard Ault
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STEAMING IN THE MID-1800s: THE STEAM ENGINE AS ALLEGORY AND SYMBOL

Sally Pearsall

Thomas Newcomen developed it, but James Watt was responsible for turning it into an engine that could run other machines. It became the chief source of power of the industrial revolution. It was responsible, either directly or indirectly, for most of the significant political, philosophical, and aesthetic developments of its time. It was the steam engine, a machine that roared into the middle of the nineteenth century, blazing a trail of change. Definitely, the steam engine was the quintessential symbol for the mid-1800s.

As the bellowing power behind the industrial revolution, the steam engine caused radical social transformations. It made factories possible, and the city-based factory system put an end to rural life and signaled the start of the industrial proletariat. The local culture and dialects of tiny villages and the landlord-peasant system began to disappear as the masses moved to the cities to work in the factories. This steam engine-induced urbanization and increased population resulted in wretched housing conditions, insufficient wages, and sixteen-hour working days for men, women and children.

The steam engine-powered factory system caused general attitude changes as well. Prior to the industrial revolution, people had lived in close-knit, rural communities where they were surrounded by fellow mammals such as dogs, cows, and horses, and where parents watched their children grow up and have children of their own. Now, people worked in factories where they

were surrounded by clanging robotic machines, and close-knit communities were unheard of in the crime-ridden slums where the factory workers lived.

Placed on wheels, the steam engine brought in the railway age, an era that drastically changed people's perceptions of the world. Quite suddenly, a previously distant European country was only a train ride away. Communication and travel were greatly improved, and the world became more reachable and less remote for everyone. Also, this steam-powered train puffed new life into the economy, injecting greater speed into industrial and commercial transactions and employing thousands of people.

The steam engine changed people's attitudes toward themselves as well.

The repetitive machine was the ideal; people worked like machines in monotonous factory jobs, and were treated like machines because they were seen as objects to be pedaled on the market. Previously, people had been human beings; now they were commodities, miniature small-unit steam engines themselves who powered the factory system and made it produce. Impersonality was a result of the steam engine.

The machine-as-ideal phenomenon extended into aesthetic values also. The indistinct, imaginative lines of Romanticism gradually gave way to a more mechanical, realistic type of art. Artistically, then, the steam engine caused change.

Though Darwin's theory of evolution was not a direct result of the steam engine, it is analogous to the steam engine in that it too caused a radical change in attitudes. Like the steam engine, Darwin's theory changed people's attitudes about themselves and the world. Suddenly the world was no longer orderly and Newtonian; instead, it was a place of constant change. In fact, natural selection was in itself a type of machine in that it was the engine that kept evolution moving along a railway track. Darwin's theory of evolution was the most notable development of an era obsessed with biology as

well as technology; however, evolution could also be symbolized by the steam engine in its mindless continuity.

Darwin's theory of evolution also gave birth to a new mode of thought - Darwinism, a philosophy that was materialistic in a time when the steam-powered factory system was obsessed with producing material goods. To Darwinists, all things physical were made up of matter, with the only differences being in the arrangement of the particles. Thus, because they were both made of matter, a human being and a machine were not fundamentally different. This materialistic view correlated with impersonal attitude that human beings were machine-like commodities.

Other philosophies that appeared in the mid-1800s were also indirectly caused by the advent of the steam engine in that they were conceived as a result of the working class that had developed from the factory system: utopian socialism with its emphasis on technology and cooperative collective ownership, and Marx and Engels' dialectical materialism, with its emphasis on material conditions as the engine of social dialectics.

The steam engine roared into the middle of the nineteenth century, leaving behind clouds of vapor and waves of philosophical, political and aesthetic change. As the catalyst of the factory system and the industrial revolution, and as the definitive analogy for Darwin's theory of evolution and Darwinian philosophy, the steam engine was the all-encompassing symbol for the mid-1800s.

THE POWER OF HUMAN COURTSHIP

Carla Prosser

Anytime, anyplace - but not with anyone. People are more particular about the partners they choose than they are about the time and place. Most people identify courtship with choosing a mate. However, courtship also attracts and repulses as well as says yes or no. Courtship keeps out more people than it lets in. Most courtships end in a screen-out well before love has a chance to begin. Courtship is a nonstop activity that goes on everywhere men and women gather. Even though they are unconsciously given and received, courting gestures work better than the sounds of speech.

One could say that human beings are doomed to court. Sooner or later almost every twosome is trapped into the routine of courting. It is always there, even though it's impossible to go the entire distance with everyone we court. A quote from THE WORDS OF GANDHI reads, "We notice [love] between father and son, between brother and sister, friend and friend. But we have to learn to use that force among all that lives, and in the use of it consists our knowledge of God. Where there is love there is life; hatred leads to destruction" (Attenborough).

Courtship runs on messages, physical signals and displays. Love may be intangible, but love communication is concrete, real. Men and women swap wooing signs to close the distance separating them. Nearness is the key to courtship and mating.

My father once explained that there is a fish that can mate without touching. The female lays the eggs in the sand, and the male fertilizes them after they are in the sand. There is no need for wooing at all. However,

when animals must touch to mate, they take on little dance routines. Swaying back and forth and other such rituals lure the mate into range for courting and mating.

For many animals, success in wooing, sending just the right signs, is a matter of life and death. Hubert and Mabel Frings explain the silent courtship of a male wolf spider in their book *ANIMAL COMMUNICATION*. The male wolf spider must get near enough to the female to begin the courting process. If he appears overeager as he creeps down her earthen burrow, she, imagining that he is either predator or prey, will attack him. "Then he performs a special dance to identify himself" (105-107). Male wolf spiders must approach cautiously because the slowed motion itself is a courting signal. Wolf spider courtship is grimmer than that found in most species. Cautiousness, slowness of motion, and gentle stroking qualities are found throughout human courtship.

In courting between men and women, there are four phases that lead into the final stages of intimacy: attention, recognition, speech, and touch. All the smiling, firm handshakes, excited greetings, nervous laughter, clown-colorful costumes and scurrying-about one sees at parties can be viewed as attention signals. The attention phase is introduced by three messages: presence ("I am here"), gender ("I am woman" or "I am man"), and harmlessness ("I will not hurt you").

Men cough, swagger, tell jokes, and stand tall. Women wear high heels that clomp, pleated dresses that sway, and perfumes that fill and define their space. Both men and women swell up and occupy a "personal space." As Julius Fast explains in his book *BODY LANGUAGE*:

No matter how crowded the area in which we humans live, each of us maintains a zone or territory around us - an inviolate area we try to keep for our own. How we defend this area and how we react to invasion of it, as well as how we encroach into other territories, can all be observed and charted and in many cases used constructively. These are all elements of nonverbal communication (26-27).

At a fraternity/sorority keg party, men and women bombard each other with nonverbal cues, as they do at parties everywhere. Women wear casual, ankle-revealing sandals, soft lamb's wool sweaters tied over the shoulder, frilly tops, lace-trimmed dresses and pearls. Men wear shoulder-enhancing sportscoats and sportshirts with open collars to display their masculine necks. Each piece of clothing has a sexual significance. Henry Dienstfry takes a stand on the "Power of Clothes." He believes, "Clothes are a billboard of the self. They express dreams and disguises, rank and status, pride and dismay. Without them we are vulnerable, and largely anonymous: with them we are clad in an armor of cloth" (68). Both sexes play up their body's gender signs. The contrast between male and female is communicated nonverbally. The sweet smell of aftershave or perfume creates a wild collage that greets your nose over the smell of spilled beer. But no one is touching. Because few get close enough to even smell each other's carefully chosen colognes, harmlessness is established.

At the same time she broadcasts her attention cues, a woman reads men's reactions. Communication in the recognition phase has an essential radar-like quality. As a woman moves through a courting space, she bounces her attention-getting signals off the assembled men and reads what they give back. In the book *SILENT MESSAGES: IMPLICIT COMMUNICATION OF EMOTIONS AND ATTITUDES*, Albert Mehrabian explains:

People approach the things that they like and avoid others that they dislike. This simple, yet general, hypothesis of a direct approach allows us to infer degrees of like-dislike not only from actual movements toward or away from people, things and even ideas, but also from observations of abbreviated movements and gestures (42).

In essence; with these radar qualities of the common bat, a woman swoops in close to men who emit "soft," positive vibrations and gives those with "hard,"

negative vibrations the cold shoulder. Throughout this entire phase of recognition, each gesture towards courting is made nonverbally.

Men also react in the same way as women. For example, a man sitting across from a woman in an office-building cafeteria gives and reads cues. The woman will not tell him how she feels in words. Therefore, he must take a nonverbal reading. Does she glance at him and turn away? Or, does she coyly tip her head forward and throw it disdainfully back? Of course, he won't consciously tally up the cues, but all her gestures and movements - or even lack of these - will automatically register on the scoreboard in his unconscious brain.

Speech is the most difficult test. Most people are screened out as soon as they open their mouths. Not only does a person lose the natural poise that silence itself carries, but conversation gives clear information about education and social background. Because of the close quarters and intimate eye contact of face-to-face conversations, a person quickly feels one way or the other - warm or cool - about the partner. As Albert Mehrabian explains, "Even today, people are discouraged from expressing personal feelings to strangers and so it becomes necessary to rely on implicit behavior to infer how another person feels and how to pursue a relationship" (156). The strain of speaking puts physical closeness to its first test.

Couples who make it through the conversation phase are now ready to shift into a new mode of communication. At this time, courtship takes a giant leap towards intimacy. Touch, our most used sense, now goes into motion.

People who send and receive love signals, do so unconsciously. For instance, the couple embracing behind the barbecue at the fraternity/sorority party sway back and forth while holding each other to provide a meaningful signal. Their rocking motion soothes and therefore makes it easy for them to stay close. In her book *THE EGO IN LOVE AND SEXUALITY*, Edrita Fried

concludes:

While our civilization frowns on natural olfactory experiences, it favors another very primitive type of physical yearning. It tolerates, encourages and satisfies in many ways the desire to rock, to move rhythmically in simple motions, to bounce and sway. Our forms of entertainment, customs, vehicles, and gadgets are designed to provide an abundance of swaying motions (145).

A woman might not understand why moving rhythmically side to side in a man's embrace is so relaxing and comforting, unless someone points out the "maternal" calming effect rocking has. Why the mother/child relationship? The intimate familiar style of rocking starts an arousing feedback cycle that brings a couple together. Infant cries stimulate parent cues. And the mothering treatment brings out infant signals. Even the lovers on a park bench will use every gesture found in the mother-child bond. The same facial snuggles and rhythmic rocking movements, pet names, and baby talk tones all emerge in the relationship. People send and receive even these communication cues and signals unconsciously.

Men and women often say, "Let's keep it casual." But they don't understand courtship. Just as free lunches are hard to find, free love hardly exists. The special communication of love itself, the sweet caresses, the intimacy, the face-to-face confrontations, and the silent, nonverbal signals can all have unexpected results. The exchanged courting signals between a man and woman create a love bond that is not easily broken. Even though they are unconsciously given and received, courting gestures work better than the sounds of speech.

DEMYSTIFYING REALITY

Margaret Rape

Susan Sontag's essay "America, Seen Through Photographs, Darkly," from her book ON PHOTOGRAPHY, praises photography that seeks to demystify reality by achieving the first essential step, which is to demystify itself. Demystification is achieved by linking beauty and importance with truth, and truth with reality, thereby making reality beautiful when it reveals the truth. Truth is both positive and negative, and is both good and evil. Truth is the melting pot of life. This essay is a challenge on Sontag's part for us to recognize the confines created by value judgments. She bases this challenge on Walt Whitman's poetic endeavors to "... change the moral weather," not by "... abolishing beauty, but by generalizing it."

Sontag commends photography which remains true to a "Whitmanesque" vision. Photographers she deems worthy of mention include Alfred Stieglitz, a leader and pioneer of the first generation of art photographers, who gained an international reputation. Walker Evans also merits mention. Evans' photographic portraits of poor white Southern sharecroppers are proof of how beauty is capable of transcending traditional stereotypes. These portraits serve as illustrations for the book LET US NOW PRAISE FAMOUS MEN, which he co-authored with James Agee. These sharecroppers are obvious victims of utter poverty, with their weather-beaten skin, expressionless faces and ragged clothing; yet they possess an undeniable dignity and an acceptance of their fate, which is awe-inspiring. These photographs compel one to go beyond preconceived interpretations of beauty and importance. Defying traditional definitions, these sharecroppers radiate a majestic stature, which is similar

to the rugged American terrain. Evans succeeds in a demystification of reality by revealing a truth of American life.

Sontag also credits Diane Arbus' photography with being worthy of association with Whitman's "euphoric humanism." Like Evans, Arbus' photography concentrates on victims, the unfortunates of society. Arbus' subjects are not merely pathetic, but repulsive. Her treatment of these people remains both candid and unsentimental. Neither compassion nor pity is sought. Arbus' photography is not in any way analagous to "starving children" advertisements that elicit a response of guilt and pity. Arbus avoids photography which plays on emotions. She emphasizes a "detachment and autonomy" which she maintains by photographing her subjects "in various degrees of unconscious, or unaware relation to their pain, their ugliness." Most of the photographs are devoid of emotional stress and instead appear "cheerful, self-accepting, matter of fact." Arbus makes us aware that "there is another world," yet it is still a part of our own. Arbus photographs "freaks" who according to their photographs are oblivious to how grotesque they appear. The response that Arbus seeks from viewers is an acceptance of the truth of these individuals' existence. In accepting this truth, reality is expanded, demystified, to include their existence.

It is of relatively little difference what subject matter is used to show the universal inaccuracy of restricting the definitions of beauty and importance to traditional conceptions. The subject matter could just as easily be grotesque creatures from outer space, should they ever choose to make an appearance and enlarge our conception of reality by confirming the truth of their existence.

Demystifying reality is important if we hope to preserve reality, for truth is reality. Demystification serves truth, for it broadens our understanding of reality to the extent that it encompasses truth. The process

of demystification initiates a confrontation with prejudice and discrimination. By revealing that which is "too shocking, painful, or embarrassing, art changes morals." The camera is a "passport that annihilates moral boundaries and social inhibitions." According to Arbus, the camera "is a device that captures it all, that seduces subjects into disclosing their secrets, that broadens experience." By challenging preconceived definitions one oversteps the boundaries which offer a haven of safety and security in value judgments, along with stagnation.

If the "Whitmanesque" attitude is to be preserved, Sontag warns against patronizing reality. Sontag fears that "Whitman's delirious powers of syntheses" are escaping our grasp. Without these powers, according to Sontag, photographers merely document "discontinuity, detritus, loneliness, greed, sterility." We do not lack interpretations of life. However, we do lack a "Whitmanesque" comprehension of the overall picture and an appreciation of the beauty inherent in the holistic view. Sontag fears that we lack Whitman's love and appreciation of the truth. She sees Whitman's pioneer spirit in the "polemical pursuit of the trivial and vulgar" being abandoned. Sontag believes that since World War II, American photography has moved from "affirmation to erosion" of the "Whitmanesque" philosophy. Whitman's determination to achieve a "leveling of discriminations" has faded fast. Sontag points to America's glorification of myths which are an arrogant refusal to recognize truth, through which reality is realized. A social construction of reality which ignores truth is a "wasteland." However, perhaps more devastating is Sontag's suggestion that the revelation of truth as portrayed by Arbus confirms that "America is the grave of the Occident."

ON TIME AND LIGHT:

A DISCUSSION OF CHAUCER'S "KNIGHT'S TALE" AND "MILLER'S TALE"

AND SHAKESPEARE'S "A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM"

Karen Richardson

Many people in the history of writing have written about our world and its people - its real individual people - with veracity and lucidity. Nearly as many have been acclaimed in their own times. But suddenly, they go out of style. Like Newton's Laws, they are simply not relative to anything beyond their own little worlds. Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" and many of Shakespeare's plays seem to pass this test. If their contemporaries are Newton's Laws, then they are surely the speed of light.

It is somehow unseemly to presume to comment on the origins, the successes, and failures of things as large as the speed of light. But that is a part of the test of time. The language is all that bars today's common man from Chaucer and Shakespeare, and that barrier has not always been present. Both men wrote about, understood, and respected men besides the nobility and the intellectual elite. Shakespeare's plays were performed in large measure for the poorest of London's poor. Chaucer's noble audience could boast of riches, but not all could boast of intellectual gifts.

Today, Shakespeare seems more accessible than Chaucer, perhaps because Chaucer has been the property of academic dons for two hundred more years. Their writings are strangely similar in that they see people with the same attitude of understanding, care, blame, and tolerance. They are grounded in their own times - hence Shakespeare is much more concerned about imagination than Chaucer, and Chaucer more concerned about authority and experience.

However, some of the situations they create are remarkably similar.

- One such example, the concern of this paper, is "A Midsummer Night's Dream." David Bevington, the editor of THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE (1980, Tucker, Georgia) credits Chaucer's "Knight's Tale" with influencing "the action involving Theseus and Hippolyta ..." (p. 227). The stories are very similar except for the addition of the faery plot and the rude mechanicals' plot in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." The rude mechanicals may have, if not a source in Chaucer, then certainly more than an analog. Shakespeare's low characters perform the same function as the characters in the "Miller's Tale," which follows the "Knight's Tale." They are a domestication and a foil to the high characters and their plots. Since Shakespeare knew one tale, why not both? Perhaps he took Chaucer's method of shining homespun light onto the courtly characters and conceived of Quince the Carpenter, Snug the Joiner, Bottom the Weaver, etc.

- Chaucer's Knight tells the first tale of the pilgrimage to Canterbury. Its theme is the philosophy of love in the Middle Ages, a message of ennobling love that evokes specters of Plato's Ladder of Love, a ladder this knight probably had to climb before he could become what he is: "a verray, parfait, gentil knight" ("Prologue," 72).

He begins with the story of Duke Theseus of Athens and the Queen he conquered in battle, Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons. The Knight does not go into a great deal of detail about their life together. He regards them as a model of married love - two people who have worked out their differences in order to share their lives - in other words, the "discordia concourse."

- On the way back to Athens with his new wife and sister-in-law, Emily, Theseus stops to conquer Thebes. He takes two royal Theban cousins, Palamon and Arcite, prisoner and sends them to "Atthenes, to dwellen in prisoun/ Perpetually-hè nolde no raunsoun" (KT, 1023-4). They are good friends, until

looking out the bars, they both fall in love with Emily.

Shakespeare's introduction is very similar. His Theseus has just returned with Hippolyta to Athens where they will be married in four days. Beginning the theme of "Discordia Concourse," he promises Hippolyta that although he "woo'd thee with my sword,/ and won thy love doing thee injuries;/ But I will wed thee in another key" (I,i,16-18). The remainder of the first scene is spent introducing the conflicting lovers. Arcite and Palamon's Renaissance counterparts, Demetrius and Lysander, are as indistinguishable as the royal cousins in the "Knight's Tale." Both are in love with Hermia, who is in love with Lysander. Her father wants her to marry Demetrius, and Theseus, siding with convention and age, gives her the choice of death or perpetual virginity. The situation is complicated by the presence of Hermia's best friend Helena, who is still in love with her former beau, Demetrius.

In both cases, Theseus is a controlling element. He sets the limits and represents the law, just as his marriage to Hippolyta represents the ideal that both the Medieval and Renaissance lovers hope to attain. The Medieval Theseus sets up the conflict by allowing Arcite to be released, but only if he promises never to return to Athens. This means losing Emily. Ultimately, this is a condition Arcite cannot accept. He returns in disguise to work in her service. Theseus gives the same kind of ultimatum to Hermia: death or perpetual virginity - a less acceptable alternative to a Renaissance character than to a Medieval one. Emily prefers virginity to marriage. To Hermia, it is the proverbial fate worse than death. Like Arcite, they go against Theseus' command and agree to meet in the woods to be married before escaping Theseus' jurisdiction.

The solution is not that simple. Shakespeare needed a supernatural element to sort out his characters' fates, so from his British heritage, he

created Oberon - King of the Faeries, and his assistant, Puck. After all four Renaissance lovers are assembled in the forest, Puck, at his master's orders, begins to play mind games with the four until they are each matched with the perfect partner. This outcome is met through the dance of love - where the four are shuffled in almost permutative fashion. As it begins, both men love Hermia; then the men are paired with the wrong women; then both men love Helena; the women fight; the men fight; finally they are all sorted out: Demetrius and Helena, and Lysander and Hermia.

Chaucer's dance of love occupies most of the remainder of the "Knight's Tale." Palamon escapes. He and Arcite meet in a grove (the Mediterranean or perhaps Celtic equivalent of the forest) where they fight. The Athenian royal family also happens to enter the grove at that time. Theseus is ready to condemn them to death when Hippolyta begs for mercy for them. At her prompting, Emily also begs for their lives.

As compared to her Renaissance counterparts, Emily is only cardboard. She is a courtly mistress, like any other courtly mistress. Helena and Hermia are individuals. When they fight, they fight not only as characters fulfilling their roles, but the way people fight, the way women fight. Emily seems to be a bit of a prig. She is probably pleased to have these two handsome men fighting over her.

Theseus imposes control over the fight and decides that each man will get one hundred knights and in one year fight a war over Emily. The tournament is treated with much ceremony. The suspense occurs when the cousins and Emily go to their respective patron gods. Both men are promised the outcome they desire, but Emily is told that she must reconcile herself to marriage. The reason there is suspense here is not only the contradictory promises, but because the audience does not know which prince Emily is fated to marry.

Chaucer fulfilled all of these promises by using fate in the guise of the supernatural. Arcite, after winning Emily in battle, is tripped by the god Pluto, falls off his horse, and eventually dies. Palamon marries Emily. The glory remains with Arcite: his burial is the climax of the story and "is treated much more elaborately than the wedding ..." (Intro. p. 8).

Chaucer allows the Miller to tell the next tale. It is a parody of the "Knight's Tale" in plot construction, characterization, even style. The style is very different. Unlike the Knight, the Miller is a natural storyteller, gregarious, japing. He sets the tale in the town of Oxford and loads the plot with details. Everyone has a name, an individual personality, a way of behaving. As if he is setting the audience up for a joke, he gives the necessary details: a board loose in Nicholas's door, a low window in Alison and John's bedroom. Because of these details and the character's ways of thinking, the story grows naturally. John, the rich old carpenter is superstitious, gullible, and not so secure as he would like to think he is. His wife is the eighteen-year-old Alison, skittish as a "joly colt" (MT 1 3263), as young, happy, and sensual as Emily is distant and restrained. Like Emily, she has two men vying for her love: Nicholas, the lewd student and shrewd boarder, and Absalon, the silly and effeminate man-about-town. There is no one who performs Theseus's function of setting up the conflict.

The conflict begins when Nicholas grabs Alison. It continues as Nicholas manipulates events to allow himself and Alison to consummate their desires. He does this in almost Puckish fashion, convincing John that there is going to be a flood, superimposing this authority over John's good (common?) sense, just as Puck confused the functions of ear and eye.

Absalon is brought into the story very early, immediately after Alison promises to give Nicholas her favors. Throughout the rest of the story, he serenades her and tries to win her in every possible way. In the end, justice

is meted out to everyone. Nicholas sustains a burning (!!) injury to match his burning desires. Absalon is humiliated for his obnoxiousness. John is declared mad. Only Alison, who was only having fun, remains unpunished.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" has a similar climax. Interspersed throughout the high characters' scenes in the forest are scenes of low characters. They have occupations much like John's. A principal character is Quince, a carpenter. The other characters are Snug, a joiner; Bottom, a weaver; Flute, a bellows minder; Snout, a tinker; and Starveling, a tailor. They are gathered in the woods outside Athens to practice a play: "The most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe" (I,ii,11-12).

They will perform this play at Theseus and Hippolyta's wedding. Like the four lovers, they have made the mistake of going into the enchanted forest. Puck not only confuses the high characters; his delight is just as great when confusing these rude mechanicals. The most easily characterized of the group are Quince and Bottom. Quince is a domestic version of Theseus. As the director of the play, he keeps everyone in line, at their duties, enjoys a quibble, and even makes long speeches. Bottom is more like Absalon. He is not effeminate, but obnoxious, though not disagreeable. His speech is peppered with malapropisms. He wants to play every part, and as they are assigned, he tells how he would play each of them. Through Puck's machinations, he is appropriately enough given the head of an ass. The other characters are frightened away and he wanders off.

In revenge for his wife Titania's lack of affection, Oberon has annointed her eyes with love juice, so that he will fall in love with whatever she sees when she awakes. "When in that moment, so it came to pass, / Titania wak'd and straightway lov'd an ass" (III,ii,33-4). Nick Bottom, weaver of Athens, has become the lover of the fairy queen. He and Oberon are obviously different, but they are also alike. Bottom dreams of doing

everything. Oberon does everything – even alters reality.

The play of "Pyramus and Thisbe" is a constant reminder of what might have happened to all the high characters – Medieval and Renaissance. It speaks of tragedy lurking around the corner, waiting for a moment when luck has looked away for a minute. Even in the "Knight's Tale," Arcite is not unlucky to have died for love. He has been enobled, gone to a new plane of existence. Their play is very, very bad and provides a merry conclusion to an entertaining dance of circumstances.

Bottom, suffering no ill effects from the now absent ass' head, plays Pyramus. Thisbe is played by Flute, who begged: "Let met not play a woman," (I,ii,41) an amusing comment from an Athenian who is presumably used to seeing Medea and Clytemnestra played by men. It is also interesting that it comes from an Elizabethan actor, whose fellow actors were all fellows.

They take their play very seriously, and are worried that the ladies will get so involved that they will be afraid of the Lion's roaring and afraid that the lovers have really died. They interpose little speeches that remind the audience of the facts, as well as of actors playing "Moonshine" and "Wall." Strangely enough, these lovers are the most noble, the most serious, equaling Palamon and Arcite. Shakespeare ridicules them and their conventions, but only through the vehicle, the rude mechanicals. He does not ridicule their love.

At the farthest distance, Chaucer in the "Knight's Tale," and Shakespeare in the Rude Mechanicals' "Pyramus and Thisbe," teach us that love enobles. Had Shakespeare taken this too seriously, or Chaucer allowed his noble characters life, these stories could have been paralyzingly painful and therefore maudlin and silly. By adding those elements already, both authors let us recognize both levels of the stories. The "Miller's Tale" shows a

different kind of love; fun, satisfying, a joke, and a method of revenge. The lovers see love as one of the tribulations of youth, something that gets easier as people mature.

The court lovers in the "Knight's Tale" and the four lovers while they are at court are portrayed in the high style which Bottom and Titania parody, and Pyramus and Thisbe both portray and parody. The rude mechanicals, the "Miller's Tale" characters, and the four lovers in the forest act in the middle style. It remains good-natured fun and never acquires the mean edge that the "Reeve's Tale" employs. The characters, plots, methods are very similar, too similar to be chance. Great minds may think alike, but they also borrow, if not necessarily whole cloth, then a collar here, a sleeve there, so that the clothes may be quite different, but the effect is the same.

ENDLESS LOVE, SELFLESS LOVE

Trish Vail

Selfless love and friendship are important themes in E. B. White's CHARLOTTE'S WEB. Charlotte, the spider, explains the importance of these points to Wilbur, the young pig:

You have been my friend...That in itself is a tremendous thing. I wove my webs for you because I liked you. After all, what's a life, anyway? We're born, we live a little while, we die. A spider's web can't help being something of a mess, with all this trapping and eating flies. By helping you, perhaps I was trying to lift up my life a trifle. Heaven knows anyone's life can stand a little of that (White, 164).

Charlotte is explaining to Wilbur that to live a little for someone else and be his friend are the important things in life. It takes courage to live this way. Courage can, therefore, be defined in CHARLOTTE'S WEB as living for others.

Fern Arable is a very courageous little girl. She loves Wilbur so much that she saves him from being killed and spends all the time she can raising him. As soon as Fern learns that her father is going to kill the runt, she has the courage to fight her dad to save him: "Please don't kill it!" (White, 52) she tells her father. Her father tries to quiet her, but Fern continues to fight with him. She tells him:

But it's unfair, the pig couldn't help being born small, could it? If I had been very small at birth, would you have killed me? (White, 3).

The courage Fern has to fight her father is the same courage that saves Wilbur from being killed as a young pig. This courage comes from love.

Eleanor Cameron, in HORN BOOK MAGAZINE writes: "Fern Arable out of love ... managed to save Wilbur" (MacMillan Company, 573). Fern shows that

all courage must have love to exist.

Fern takes the time to raise Wilbur right. She warms his milk for him and feeds it to him. She does this three times a day. She also takes him for walks with her dolls. When Wilbur gets tired, Fern puts him in the buggy with the doll, and if he is very tired, he takes a nap. Even after Wilbur is sold to the Zuckermans, Fern visits him every day. According to Eleanor Cameron, "Fern's whole life is Wilbur and the events of the barn" (MacMillan Company, 576). Anne Carroll in HORN BOOK MAGAZINE writes: "No such country child would have spent day after day beside the manure to which the pig was consigned" (Gale Research Company, 193). But Fern is a very unusual child. She is not selfish as most children are. Through this unselfishness, Fern finds courage to live as much for Wilbur as she does herself.

Fern is not Wilbur's only friend; Charlotte, too, is a true friend to Wilbur. Even though Charlotte is a lot smaller than the other animals on the farm, she sticks up for Wilbur when the other animals put him down. A lamb tells Wilbur, "You smell just the way you are ... I can smell you from here, you're the smelliest creature in the place" (White, 61). Wilbur is very upset by these harsh words. Charlotte has the courage to stand up to the lamb:

Let Wilbur alone!...He has a perfect right to smell, considering his surroundings. You're no bundle of sweet peas yourself. Furthermore, you are interrupting a very pleasant conversation" (White, 61).

James Steel Smith, in A CRITICAL APPROACH TO CHILDREN'S LITERATURE, writes this of Charlotte's personality: "loyal, cooperative, domestic" (Gale Research Company, 194). John Rowe Townsend agrees with him, saying Charlotte's personality is "loyal" (Gale Research Company, 194). Through this Loyalty, she has the courage to stand up for Wilbur because she is a

true friend.

Charlotte always takes the time to console Wilbur when he feels down. According to Eleanor Cameron, Charlotte is "controlled in the face of Wilbur's hysterics and desperation" (MacMillan Company, 574). When Wilbur first finds out that he is being fattened up to be killed and turned into bacon, he is very upset. He begins crying and screaming, "I don't want to die!" (White, 51). Charlotte tells him, "You shall not die" (White, 51). Wilbur asks, "Who's going to save me?" (White, 51). Charlotte says, "I am ... I am going to save you and I want you to quiet down immediately ... stop your crying!" (White, 51). Through Charlotte's calm ways, she manages to find the courage to calm Wilbur.

Later, when Wilbur becomes worried about dying again, Charlotte tries to console Wilbur by saying, "I am not going to let you die, Wilbur" (White, 63). She tells him, "I'm working on a plan" (White, 63). Wilbur asks her, "How is the plan coming, Charlotte?" (White, 63). Charlotte replies, "Oh, it's coming all right ... the plan is still in its early stages and hasn't completely shaped up yet, but I'm working on it" (White, 63). Charlotte tells Wilbur this to cheer him up, although she hasn't thought of a plan yet. Charlotte is very concerned for Wilbur; she is calm and effective in making Wilbur happy and carefree. This takes true courage.

Charlotte takes the time to tell Wilbur stories even when she is very tired. Charlotte tells Wilbur a story of her cousin who caught a fish in web. After Charlotte finishes with this story, she tells Wilbur another story about her cousin who was an aeronaut. Eleanor Cameron writes that Charlotte is "patient as spiders have need to be" (MacMillan Company, 575). Charlotte uses this patience to give her courage to tell Wilbur stories when she is really too tired to do anything.

The most important display of courage that Charlotte makes is her

devotion to saving Wilbur. The author of *AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS*, writes: "Charlotte, out of love and friendship ... save(s) the pig" (Hoffman, Miriam Company, 409). Because of this love and friendship, Charlotte worked day and night to save Wilbur from being turned into bacon. Charlotte even has Templeton, the selfish rat, working to save Wilbur. Even when she knows that she is dying, she still goes to the fair with Wilbur to help save him. When Wilbur asks her when she is going to spin her web for the fair she says,

This afternoon if I'm not too tired...The least thing makes me tired these days. I don't seem to have the energy I once had. My age, I guess.
(White, 136)

But as tired as she is, she spins one last web for Wilbur; it displays the word "humble." This is one of the last things Charlotte does before she dies. According to Anderson and Groff, "The web, then, becomes symbolic of unselfish love, which, in turn, becomes a symbol of courage: the courage that Charlotte has to think of Wilbur and not herself."

Wilbur shows his courage through his love for Charlotte. He tells Charlotte, "I would gladly give my life for you - I really would" (White, 164). But, he cannot give his life for her; his task is to care for her children. Wilbur has Templeton take the egg sac down from the corner of the ceiling. He tells Templeton, "Please, Templeton, climb up and get the egg sac" (White, 167). It takes some coaxing, but Templeton finally carries out Wilbur's wishes.

Wilbur places the egg sac in a safe place and waits for the new spiders to arrive from it. When Charlotte's children finally arrive, E. B. White writes:

Wilbur's heart pounded. He began to squeal. Then he raced

in circles kicking manure into the air. Then he turned a back flip (White, 177).

Wilbur also watches her grandchildren and her great-grandchildren come into the world. Anderson and Groff write: "Wilbur sees her (Charlotte) reborn in her children each spring" (White, 90).

Seeing her reborn each spring does not bring Charlotte back into Wilbur's life. Eleanor Cameron writes: "Wilbur never forgets Charlotte, nor can his love for her children and grandchildren ever supplant his love for her" (MacMillan Company, 576). E. B. White writes:

Wilbur never forgot Charlotte. Although he loved her children dearly, none of the new spiders ever quite took her place in his heart (White, 184).

Even though Wilbur never forgets Charlotte and he always misses her, he finds courage through his love for her to face her death with security.

Courage, in CHARLOTTE'S WEB, lies in the hearts of the characters.

Through the expression of selfless love and true friendship, Wilbur, Charlotte, and Fern show true courage. They are willing to sacrifice part of themselves for others. This is one of the hardest things in life to do, and to be able to do it shows courage from the heart. As Flannery O'Connor said, "The roots of the eye are in the heart" (MacMillan Company, 575). In the heart are also the roots of courage.

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